

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 12913 230931Z

15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 SCCT-01 /073 W

----- 003503

R 230900Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8750

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LE, SY

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS REACTION TO REPORTS OF "FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT/
IN ZAHLE FIGHTING

1. QUESTION OF POSSIBLE FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT
FIGHTING AROUND LEBANESE TOWN OF ZAHLE LARGELY OVER-SHADOWED
BY PEREGRINATIONS OF HIJACKED OPEC OIL MINISTERS IN EGYPTIAN
PRESS DECEMBER 23, BUT SUBJECT NONETHELESS TREATED IN STRAIGHT-
FORWARD MANNER, WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT, ON FRONT PAGES OF
CAIRO DAILIES. ALL PAPERS CITE OFFICIAL LEBANESE NEWS AGENCY
STATEMENT DECEMBER 22 THAT "FOREIGN INTERVENTION" HAD OCCURRED
IN ZAHLE IMBROGLIO AND ARTICLES ALSO CITE IRAQI NEWS SOURCES
WHICH CLAIM THAT "INTERVENTION" WAS BY REGULAR SYRIAN ARMY
FORCES. LACK OF COMMENT FROM DAMASCUS ON SUBJECT ALSO MENTIONED
BY CAIRO PRESS.

2. COMMENT: PERHAPS THE CAIRO DAILIES TOO PREOCCUPIED
EDITORIALIZING AGAINST HIJACKERS OF OPEC MINISTERS,
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BUT LACK OF COMMENT ON LEBANESE CHARGES OF SYRIAN

INVOLVEMENT IN ZAHLE NOTICEABLE BY ITS OMISSION, AS
EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN WARNING DARKLY OVER PAST WEEKS
ABOUT JUST SUCH AN EVENT. POSSIBLE GOE DOES NOT WISH
TO MUDDY WATERS JUST PRIOR TO VISIT TO DAMASCUS BY
SAUDI KING KHALID TO DISCUSS LEBANESE QUESTION.
EILTS

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